REMARKS

Claims 1-19 are pending in the application. Claims 1, 8, and 15 have been amended hereby. New Claim 20 has been added. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

Initially, paragraph [0095] of the published application has been deleted hereby.

Reconsideration is respectfully requested of the rejection of Claims 1-19 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b), as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,804,752 ("Sone").

Embodiments of the present invention arrange the target actions into groups of successive target actions. The timing offset is detected at the beginning of each group and then applied as the relative displacement between the detected user actions and the target times for the duration of each group of target actions (e.g. a sung sentence that makes up the entire song). Each group of user actions (sung sentence) that is intended to correspond to the group of target actions is thus likely to have a different timing offset. This means that small deviations in timing of when a user starts to perform each group of user actions are accounted for by the system and the score data is generated fairly by taking account of these differences.

For example, if a user consistently sings slightly behind the beat, it is likely that the user will score poorly because each individual user action would miss its respective target time. By applying the detected offset as a relative displacement between the target actions and the detected user actions, a user can still achieve a high score if, for example, they sing the correct notes but there is a timing offset between the target actions and the user actions (sung notes).

This means that embodiments of the present invention can continuously adjust to timing differences between the user-actions and the target timing so as to ensure a fair score. For example, a user would therefore not be unfairly penalized for pausing slightly half way through a song (for example to breath) and coming in slightly late with the next song sentence. These

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advantages, together with the novel features which provide the above advantages, are neither taught by nor hinted at in Sone. By way of contrast, Sone merely uses a timing offset to generate a score but does not provide any teaching that the offset can be applied as a relative displacement between the target actions and the detected user actions. In other words, Sone suffers from the same problem that embodiments of the present invention seek to address.

Sone, as best understood, relates to a karaoke device in which voices of two or more singers may be evaluated individually and separately from each other. However, Sone does not teach or suggest applying a detected offset as a relative displacement between user actions and target times. Furthermore, Sone does not teach or suggest that target actions may be grouped as successive groups of target actions, that the timing offset is detected at the beginning of each group of target actions, and that the timing offset is applied as the relative displacement for the duration of each group of target actions, as recited in amended independent Claims 1 and 15, and new Claim 20.

By way of contrast, Sone merely uses a difference calculator (col. 7, lines 8-23) to generate difference data which indicates a difference between a detected pitch and volume of a singer and respective reference values (col. 8, lines 1-3). Sone then uses the difference data to generate a score for each singer (col. 8, lines 41-50 and Figure 14). Nowhere does Sone teach or suggest that a timing offset can be applied as a relative displacement between target times and detected user actions, as recited in amended independent Claims 1 and 15, and new Claim 20.

Accordingly, It is respectfully submitted that amended independent Claims 1 and 15, and new Claim 20, and the claims depending therefrom, are patentably distinct over Sone.

In view of the amendments and remarks set forth above, this application is believed to be in condition for allowance which action is respectfully requested. However, if for any reason the

Examiner should consider this application not to be in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the number listed below prior to issuing a further Action.

Any fee due with this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-1290.

Favorable reconsideration is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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